17th March 1955]

SRI K. ARANGANATHAN :—" பயிர்களுக்கு ஏற்படப்போகும் வியாதிகளைப் பற்றியும் குறிப்பாக நெற்பயிர்களுக்கு ஸ்டெம்-போரர் வியாதி ஏற்படும் என்பதையும் விவசாயிகளுக்கு வாரந்தோறும் தெரிவிக்கப்படுவதாக அறிக்கையில் கூறப்பட்டிருக்கிறது. அம்மாதிரி அதிகாரிகள் விவசாயிகளுக்குத் தகவல் கொடுப்பதென்பது நடைமுறையில் இல்லாமலிருக்கிறது. அரசாங்கம் இது விஷயத்தில் தக்க நடவடிக்கை எடுக்குமா ?"

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" அரசாங்கம் தக்க நடவடிக்கை எடுத்துகொள்ளும். ஆனால், ஒவ்வொரு விவசாயிக்கும் நேராகப்போய் அதிகாரிகள் சொல்வார்கள் என்று எதிர்ப்பார்ப்பதற்கில்லை."

SRI V. C. PALANISWAMI GOUNDER :—" May I remind the Government of the saying that prevention is better than cure? Now, the method adopted by the Government is more for curing than for preventing the disease. May I request the Government to take very intensive steps to find out methods for prevention of this disease? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" I may assure the hon. Member that the Government have been taking all steps possible to prevent the disease."

SRI K. RAMAKRISHNA AYYAR :—" Is there any fundamental research initiated to control this disease so that this may be prevented once for all? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" I have already stated that this is a world problem. Researches are there. I do not know whether any fundamental researches have succeeded so far."

SRI P. SELVARAJ :—" Are not the seed roots of the seedlings treated with anti-pest drug to prevent this stem-borer disease? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" That aspect also is being looked into."

SRI V. BALAKRISHNAN :—" Will the Government pioneer an international research in all tropical countries affected by this pest? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" I am afraid that it is not possible to do it."

District board elections.

* 1403 *Q.*—SRI V. R. KRISHNA AYYAR : Will the Hon. the Minister for Local Administration be pleased to state—

(*a*) the total number of votes cast in the whole State in the recent district board elections; and

(*b*) how many votes were held invalid?

THE HON. SRI S. S. RAMASAMY PADAYACHI :—" (*a*) & (*b*) The total number of votes polled in the recent elections to district boards in this State is 6,515,743 and the number of votes declared invalid is 554,285."

[17th March 1955

SRI V. R. KRISHNA AYYAR :—" In view of the invalid votes being in an alarming proportion, namely, 5 lakhs votes out of 65 lakhs votes polled and in view of the sterilization of illiterate voters by this process of marking because they are not able to understand the method and usefully exercise their vote by marking in the correct place, would the Government revise their idea and bring the voting system in respect of district board elections in line with that in respect of other general elections? "

THE HON. SRI S. S. RAMASAMY PADAYACHI :—" The Hon. the Leader of the House will reply to this question because he is in charge of elections."

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" I have already answered this question on the floor of the House."

8-40 a.m. SRI S. PANCHAKSHARAM :—" In the last general election where there was the system of providing one box for each candidate who contested the election, there was fraud committed by some voters at least by carrying away the ballot paper outside the polling booth and handing it over to the agents of the candidate. Now under the new method of voting by marking introduced in the recent district board elections, is not that kind of fraud prevented? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" It was because of that fraud, we wanted to try another system which could be more effective but in that system we found that there were many invalid votes. Perhaps we will study and find out some other method which would be more suitable."

SRI K. P. KUTTIKRISHNAN NAIR :—" Are the Government aware that the number of invalid votes swelled because there was propaganda by some of the political parties when they knew that those votes would not go to them? It was only as a result of it those votes became invalid."

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" It might have been so in certain areas and perhaps particularly in Malabar."

SRI K. VINAYAKAM :—" Sir, a few days ago a similar question came up before this House and the Hon. Minister in charge of Finance assured the House that the system of marking ballot papers would be discontinued in the future elections. What has happened to that assurance and what is going to be the method that would be adopted in the coming elections to the Corporation of Madras and municipalities of the State? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" This would be announced in time. I never said that the system which we adopted in the district board elections would be discontinued. We want to scrutinize it and perhaps make some further adaptations which would minimize these invalid votes."

17th March 1955]

Sri K. ARANGANATHAN :—" Sir, according to the Representation of the People Act, voting is done by seeing the symbol on the ballot box but in the recent district board elections, voting was done by marking. Why should the Government confuse the rural people by often changing the system of voting? "

The Hon. Sri C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" This matter has already been discussed on the floor of this House and I have answered a number of questions. After all, we have to make experiments and evolve a formula which would be most suitable to our country and that is the process which is going on now."

Sri K. VINAYAKAM :—" Arising out of the answer given by the Hon. Minister, it is evident that both the systems, viz., dropping the ballot paper in the ballot box and marking the ballot paper, have got defects of their own. In order to avoid these defects, I request the Government to appoint a watcher in the polling booth to watch whether a voter casts his vote or not. This is a foolproof system and will avoid defects. Will the Government adopt such a system? "

The Hon. Sri C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" But the secrecy of voting is affected by that process. In one system there is room for fraud and in another there is room for invalid votes. I would rather prefer invalid votes than give room for fraud."

Foundation of road in Koduvatti.

* 1404 *Q.*—Sri K. ARANGANATHAN (on behalf of Sri M. Venugopala Gounder): Will the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether any representation was received by the Government in November 1954 from the villagers of Koduvatti, hamlet of Sathamangalam village, Tindivanam taluk in South Arcot district, regarding the formation of a road in that village, under the Local Development Scheme;

(*b*) whether the villagers have promised to contribute one-fourth of total expenditure for the formation of that road; and

(*c*) if so, the action taken so far?

The Hon. Sri M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" (*a*) No, Sir.

" (*b*) & (*c*) Does not arise."

Repairs to temple tanks in Malabar.

* 1405 *Q.*—Sri K. P. GOPALAN: Will the Hon. the Minister for Religious Endowments and Transport be pleased to state—

(*a*) the number of temple tanks in Malabar district, used by the general public, which are in a state of utter disrepair;

(*b*) whether the Executive Officers of any such temples have sent any proposals for repairing them and improving their general condition;